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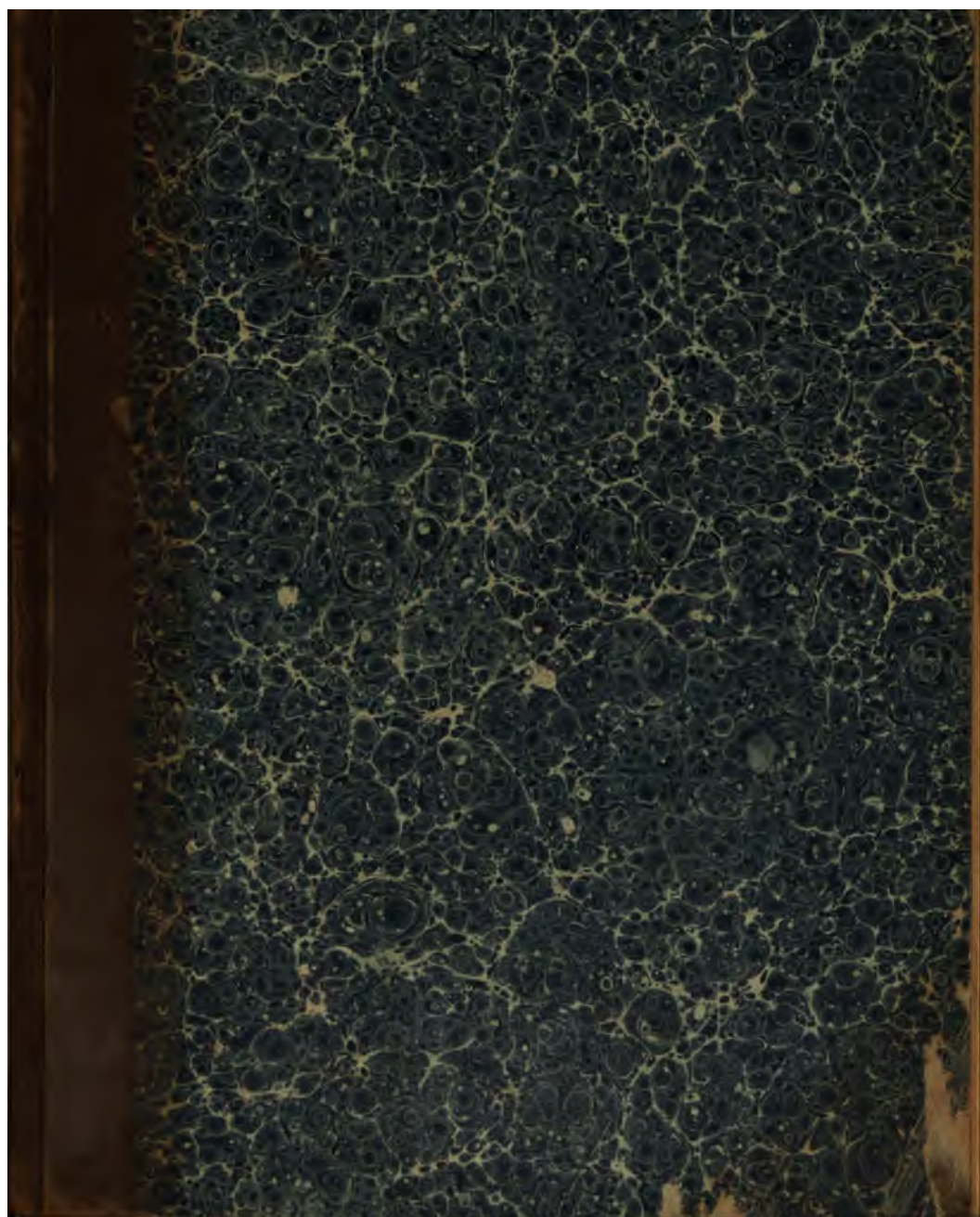
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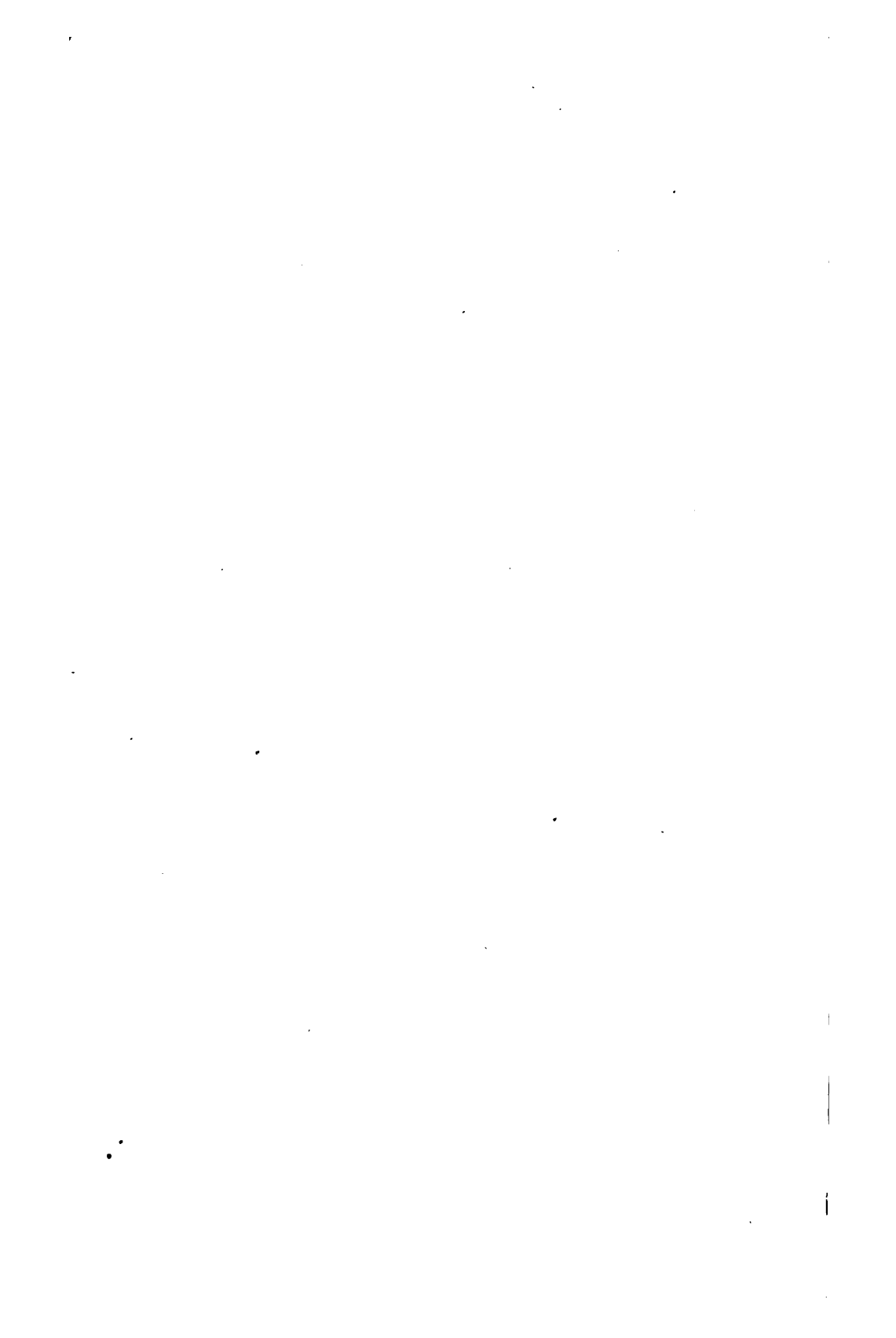


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A S E R M O N.

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A S E R M O N

ON THE

NECESSITY, NATURE, AND END

OF

WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER,

ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME.

BY THE

REV. H. H. BEAMISH, M. A.

MINISTER OF TRINITY CHAPEL, CONDUIT-STREET.

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A S E R M O N.

ST. LUKE xxi. 36.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

THE special services of the church at this season continually direct our attention to the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. The importance of this annual celebration will be felt, and its wisdom recognized, when we consider that that event is held forth in Holy Scripture as the great hope of the church—the season of emancipation to “the whole creation” from the “bondage of corruption,” and its introduction “into the glorious liberty of the children of God,” the crowning of God’s purposes of grace and providence in the earth.

Are we sinners awakened to a sense of our

guilt and danger, and desirous of obtaining pardon and life? Our hopes are at once directed to the second coming of our Lord, (Acts iii. 19—21,) “Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Are we dying? Our Lord’s advent is pointed out as the source and season of our deliverance. (John xi. 25, 26.) “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” And again, Jesus declares, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day, and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” And the apostle, in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, asserts, that when the “second Man the Lord from heaven” comes, we shall “bear his image,” that the “trumpet shall then sound,” “the dead be raised incorruptible, and the living be

changed," the bodies of the saints "fashioned like unto Christ's body of glory;" and in the bright and full realization of this consummation by faith, the inspired and enraptured Paul publishes his challenge of defiance to the last enemy of man—"O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Are we "saved by hope?" What is *the hope* that is set before us? (Titus ii. 11—13.) "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for *that* blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Are we groaning under the pressure of physical or moral sufferings, the painful consciousness of imperfection in ourselves and all around us here below? from what prospect does scripture instruct us to draw relief? The apostle Paul again tells us, in the 8th of Romans and the 5th of 2 Corinthians, "We ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the *adoption*, to wit, the *redemption* of the *body*;" for we that are in this tabernacle

do groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Do we sorrow for those who are gone before, whose spirits have left their "houses of clay," and are now "present with the Lord?" Whence do the Scriptures date the happy period of our re-union with them, when we shall "see them again and our hearts shall rejoice"—when all the members of the Lord's adopted family shall 'meet to part no more?' Hear the testimony of the apostle again in the 4th chapter of 1 Thessalonians: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words." Again, are we "running the race that is set before us, looking for an incorruptible crown?" When shall we reach the goal and receive our reward? The apostle answers, in the 4th chapter

of the 2nd epistle to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me in *that* day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his *appearing*." Are we commanded to be active and persevering in all holy obedience? What are we furnished with as its impulse and its end? Peter thus addresses us,—“Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of *Jesus Christ*, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.” And so the apostle Paul, presenting us with this object of the believer’s “earnest expectation,” makes it the great stimulus to unceasing “works of faith and labours of love,” —“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that good labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Are we elected in the eternal purpose of Divine love? it is “to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, now reserved in heaven—a “salvation ready to be *revealed in the last day*.”

Do we “rejoice”—yea, “*greatly*”? It is in the anticipation of this blessedness. Are God’s

people now tried—are they “in heaviness through manifold temptations”? it is that “the trial of their faith may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing of Jesus Christ*.” Do we anxiously desire to be perfectly “conformed to the image of God’s Son,” when is this likeness to be matured? St. John, in the 3rd chapter of his 1st epistle, points out the time when it shall be complete: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that *when he shall appear* we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Are we now sealed with the Spirit of Christ? Paul, in his 1st chapter to the Ephesians, teaches in what light we are to view this sacred and essential gift. He calls it “the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance *until the redemption of the purchased possession*.” Do we long to put on our regal and sacerdotal robes—to wear the honours which grace has promised and the blood of Jesus Christ has purchased? We learn from the 5th, 7th, and 20th chapters of Revelation, that it is at the *coming of Christ* our temple shall be built and our thrones set up. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and

hast made us unto our God kings and priests,
 and we shall reign *upon the earth.*" And again ;
 " After this I beheld, and lo ! a great multitude
 of all nations and people and tongues stood be-
 fore the throne and before the Lamb, clothed
 with white robes and palms in their hands, and
 cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our
 God which sitteth on the throne and unto the
 Lamb. These are they that came out of great
 tribulation, (literally, the tribulation, even the
 great one,) and have washed their robes and
 made them white in the blood of the Lamb,
 therefore are they before the throne of God and
 serve him day and night in his temple, and he
 that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among
 them. For the Lamb which is in the midst of
 the throne shall feed them and shall lead them
 to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe
 away all tears from their eyes." And again,
 " I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and
 judgment was given unto them, and I saw the
 souls of them that were beheaded for the wit-
 ness of Jesus and for the word of God, and had
not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither
had received his mark upon their foreheads or in
their hands, and they lived and reigned with
 Christ a thousand years. This is the first re-
 surrection," (literally, this is *the resurrection*,
 even the *first.*) Do we, in a word, desire the

destruction of sin—the sweeping out of God’s kingdom “everything that offendeth”? Do we desire the final establishment and universal prevalence of truth—the uprooting of heresy—the removal of the curse from this world—the deliverance of the whole creation from corruption—the creation of “new heavens and a new earth”—the performance of the “will of God on earth as it is in heaven”? Do we desire the destruction of death—the end of all woe and sorrow—the drying up of all tears—the supply of all human wants—the fruition of all human hopes—the “manifestation” and glory of God’s children—the cessation of all the evils that cleave to our fallen condition—the personal abiding of our glorious Lord with us—the triumph of his soul’s travail—the full developement and completion of God’s high and holy purposes? Do we desire these things? Then are they all comprehended in, and inseparably connected with, the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this glorious event is not only set before us as the crowning of the church’s hope—her installation to her covenanted dignities—but (as a necessary consequence) it is represented as affixing the black seal of irremediable woe upon the condition of all Christ’s enemies. This is the awful truth to be gathered from Isa. xxiv. “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh

it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;" (the professing church has the awful precedence in these exterminating judgments;) "as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him." This and the remaining part of this dark picture of desolation is exhibited in connexion with the "reign of the Lord of hosts in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Again, in Isaiah lxiii. 1—4, which passage cannot with any propriety be applied to our Lord's *first* advent in *mercy* and *humiliation*, and which is plainly parallel with Revelations xix. 11—16, the overwhelming judgments which shall immediately precede or accompany our Lord's second advent are portrayed; and the prophet Malachi, in his 2nd and 4th chapters, repeats the same tremendous announcements: "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." And again, "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn

them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." The same awful prediction of judgment drops from the lips of the Lord,—the patient, long-suffering, loving Jesus,—in the verses immediately preceding my text. Here, then, we find that the same glorious event which, like the pillar of cloud and fire, presents a *bright* and cheering aspect to the believer—the symbol of a *present God*, covenanting to save and bless his people, has a *dark* side, portentous of ruin to his enemies—the symbol of the *same Being* in wrath, “come out of his place to avenge him of his adversaries, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, to take to him his great power and to reign.”

But while the infliction of these terrific judgments upon “all the face of the earth” is predicted in terms of *general* application, there are some prophecies, particularly in Daniel and the book of Revelation, in which the vials of Divine wrath are brought to bear with special weight and peculiar pressure upon a *mysterious* but *defined* power, and a dark but intelligibly-marked spot, both of which are reserved in the immutable determination of retributive justice for utter consumption and destruction. These are the *papacy* and the *ten kingdoms* of the *western Roman empire*, or “the *beast*” and “his *seat*.” Thus, in the 16th chapter of Revelation, the

inspired apostle hears "a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." In execution of this command, he tells us that the "first went and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image." These vials are represented in the 15th chapter as containing "the seven last plagues in which is FILLED UP the wrath of God." The four first vials are poured out upon the whole surface of the earth within the geographical boundary of the ten divided kingdoms of the western Roman empire, and on those of their inhabitants "who have the mark of the beast;" while the fifth and seventh are declared to have their destructive contents emptied upon "the seat of the beast," or "great Babylon." Thus the sixth vial is the *only one* of these instruments of Divine vengeance, the application of which is not with deliberate and steady aim directed against the "seat" or dependencies of the anti-christian apostacy. But while this vial, so diverted, is being poured out, and this locality is favoured by a partial and temporary suspension of the Divine judgments, the period of God's patience is signalized by the going forth of three unclean spirits," or a threefold principle

of evil issuing from a triple combination—satanic, secular, and religious, “The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet,” to fill up the measure of human iniquity, and gather an apostate world to the final struggle with the Lord God Almighty. These powers are all one in mind and purpose, and though distinct, are yet confederated in this work of fraud and delusion upon men and high treason against God; for the dragon gives his authority to the beast, the beast is but an incarnation of the dragon, and the false prophet or ecclesiastical power is a co-operating party, the leading and effective agent in the foul conspiracy, giving to the tremendous project of dethroning Christ the aspect of a pious enterprise, and cloaking the deep designs of hell under the specious character of the high purposes of heaven. These are remarkable and alarming predictions, and lest we may be at a loss to discern the power and to mark the place thus denounced as the head and theatre of anti-christian rebellion, the 17th chapter furnishes a new symbol, a double representation of the one and of the other seen in mysterious and monstrous union, and afterwards so intelligibly explained and defined as to leave no doubt as to their nature and identity.

The hieroglyphic now employed by the Holy Spirit is that of a “woman seated upon a scarlet-

coloured beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Upon the woman's forehead is seen engraved the name, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." This double sign, by the manner of its representation, intimates the mutual relation in which the parts composing it stand towards each other. The woman rules the beast, while the beast supports the woman. The angel then proceeds to explain the mystery, and declares its meaning: "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns: the beast that thou sawest *was*, and *is not*, and *yet is*, or (in other words) this embodiment of evil is *continuous* and *identical*: its character and personality are the same as ever, it is only altered in form and appearance. This "beast *was*," as thou sawest it in a previous vision, "with seven heads and ten horns," the *heads* being *crowned* and the *horns uncrowned*, as in the 12th chapter. This beast "*is not*" in form and appearance what it then was, but "*it is*," what, as subsequently exhibited, thou sawest it, with "seven heads and ten horns," but with the *horns crowned* and the *heads uncrowned*, and such it still remains. Again, "There are seven kings, five are fallen and one is, and the other is not yet come; and

when he cometh he must continue for a short space; and the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition; and the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour (or at the *same time*) with the beast." Thus, then, the angel opens and identifies one part of this double symbol. The "seven heads" represent seven successive forms of government which were to be historical indexes to the discovery of this diabolical power—of these, "five had fallen" previously; "the sixth" was the ruling power in the apostle's time; "the seventh" was yet to occupy the seat of empire, but was to be of short duration; and the eighth, which was to succeed and to survive them all, was to be the sole and final head, receiving his elevation at the *same time* with the "ten kings," or "horns," they receiving their regal power from the head, or growing upon it, while the head itself was to be "of the seven," the successor of them, and, in many points of similitude, like to them. This power is manifestly the same with the "little horn" of Daniel, which was to rise up "among the ten horns" of the "fourth beast," or *Roman* empire; and whose proud usurpation of authority was to continue "until the ancient of days came," but whose destruction the prophet thus

predicts : " I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake ; I beheld even till the beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame."

Thus, then, we learn, from the prediction of Daniel and the exposition of the apocalyptic angel, that " the beast " was to be *substantially one, identically the same*, from first to last ; that however modified in *form*, it was to be an incarnation of Satan ; that it should be distinguished in its last developement by the figure of a supreme head or ruler, ruling over and rising contemporaneously with " ten horns or kings," which were to grow out of itself and endure through different fluctuations of weakness and strength, of " wounding and healing," of *apparent* death and subsequent revival, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the " saints of God shall possess the kingdom." Here we are instructed as to *what* the *beast* is, and that his *representative* is a *man*, his *organ* a *false prophet*, his *body* an *empire*, his *members* his *subjects*, his *power* *satanical*, and his *end* *perdition*.

But the angel, when unfolding this mystery, points out the *locality* occupied by this monster when explaining the *second* part of this double emblem, so that we are informed not only as to *what* the beast is, but *where* he resides. Thus the expounding angel proceeds in his interpretation :

“ The seven heads are *seven mountains* on which the woman sitteth; the waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are *peoples* and multitudes and nations and tongues;” and again, “ The woman which thou sawest is *that great city* which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Here, then, is a graphic and distinctly-defined description of the local habitation of the beast and the woman. The woman sits on, or governs the beast. The seven heads of the beast have a double signification, one of which points out the locality which he occupies. The woman sits on “ seven mountains,” governs “ peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues;” and the woman, moreover, is “ that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Let, then, the simplest outlines of profane history be consulted with a view of ascertaining the geographical position of the empire and the city represented by the symbols of the beast and the woman, and it would seem to be only by a wilful rejection, or grievous misunderstanding of the plainest data furnished by the interpreting angel, that we can arrive at any conclusion but one—namely, that the vision vouchsafed is that of the *Roman empire* and the *city of Rome*. But again, this symbol of the woman clearly intimates, by the features ascribed to her in the inspired portraiture, that not only is the *city of Rome* here pointed out,

but the *Church of Rome* likewise. The woman is not only styled “Babylon the Great,” and that great city that reigneth, &c., but the *mother of harlots*. She is described as “drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” This figurative language, which depicts the awful wickedness of this apostate power, corresponds (in the emblem employed with respect to the nature of the power itself) with those metaphorical terms so frequently used in Scripture to represent the *true church of Christ*; and we are thus taught that the papacy which boasts itself to be a *church*, yea, *the only true church*, is but Satan’s caricature of the true original—the “mystical body of Christ.” Thus the apostle Paul, in the the fourth of Galatians, when comparing the spiritual character of the gospel dispensation with the fleshly character of the Mosaic economy, and contrasting the liberty of the one with the bondage of the other, traces the condition of the children of each to the mystical parentage from whence they respectively spring, and describes “Hagar” as typifying “*Mount Sinai* in Arabia, and begetting children unto bondage.” And the “free-woman,” or Sarah, as shadowing forth “*Jerusalem* above, who is the mother of us all.” But this application of the character of a *city* and a *woman* to the true church of Christ is still more

strikingly seen in the 21st chapter of Revelation: "And there came to me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the *Lamb's wife*; and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high *mountain*, and showed me that *great city*, the holy *Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God." Here, then, the true church of Christ is called a *city* and a *woman*, *Jerusalem* and the *Lamb's wife*, and so is the *apostate Church of Rome* described in the passage before us as a "*city*" and a "*woman*," the "*Great Babylon*," and "the *mother of harlots*," the *queen-consort of the beast*.

But to pursue more directly the subject of our discourse, we would observe, that by a comparison of the chapter from whence our text is taken, with the 24th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, we shall discover that there are three distinct points of inquiry included in the questions put by the disciples to our Lord, respecting the predictions he had just delivered; and to each of these inquiries a distinct answer appears to be given. The first object of inquiry is, "*When shall these things be?*" Our Lord's answer to this question would appear to be contained in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew from the 4th to the 14th verse. The second object of

inquiry is, “ *What sign* will there be when these things come to pass?—the reply to which we find in the same chapter, from the 15th to the 22nd verse. The third question is, “What shall be the *sign of thy coming*, and of the end of the world?” (or age?) to which Jesus answers in Matthew xxiv. 24—30; and Luke xxi. 25—33. Now, from these passages we learn, as well as from a variety of other Scripture testimonies, that there are four remarkable events announced in prophecy, as intimately connected with our Lord’s second advent, which demand the solemn attention of His people as signs of the approach of that blessed consummation—hand-posts (if we may so speak) pointing out the path and progress of the Divine purposes. The first of these, to which we would direct your notice, is, that of the *restoration* of the *Jews* to their own land, and their full establishment in those territorial possessions and political privileges as a nation, confirmed to them by the oath of Jehovah in the Abrahamic covenant. Now our Lord declares that “this people shall be led away captive into all nations,” and “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Here, then, we have the express assertion of Jesus Christ, that the deliverance of Jerusalem from Gentile oppression, and the termination of the season of grace to the nations of the earth, or

the Gentile dispensation, are to be cotemporaneous; and the apostle Paul, in the 11th chapter of Romans, represents these two synchronical events as immediately introductory to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. He declares that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written: There shall *come out of Sion the Deliverer*, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

In the 11th and 12th chapters of Isaiah, the prophet affixes one and the same date to the accomplishment of the following glorious events: "In *that* day the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left from Assyria—and from the islands of the sea—and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth;"—"And in *that* day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious." "And in *that* day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me;"—"Cry out, and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." And again, in the 24th, 25th, and 26th chapters of the same prophecies, the

same day is signalized by the triumph of God's ancient people, and the visible manifestation of the Lord of hosts. In *that* day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah : " We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks, *when* the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" — *when* the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." In the 23rd, 31st, and 32nd chapters of the prophet Jeremiah, the same remarkable connexion is observable ; and in the 3rd of Hosea, and the 12th of Zechariah, the Holy Spirit announces, that when " the Lord shall *restore* the *children of Israel*, and save the *tents of Judah*, they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days ; and they shall *look upon Him* whom they have pierced, and mourn." Here, then, is a chain of evidence from prophecy, closely connecting together the restoration of God's ancient people and the advent of the Lord Jesus ; and warning God's believing children that the signs which indicate the approximation of the one event, should also convince them of the nearness of the other. Should not these prophetical assur-

ances act with a powerful practical effect upon the minds of all Christians, especially in these days? Who can contemplate the extraordinary condition of Palestine, or, as it is emphatically styled, "the Land of Promise," and not conclude that God is, by an unprecedented combination of influences and providential events, opening the way for the return of "the kings of the East?" Would it not appear that "the set time is come," when, by a variety of agencies (some unconscious) His immutable purposes towards his ancient people—still "beloved for the Father's sakes,"—are about to be accomplished? "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," and it would appear obvious that the depth of His mysterious wisdom in His dealings with them is now about to be developed. We said a variety of agencies, all tending towards this consummation, are now in operation; and that this should be the case when the Lord is about to "arise and have mercy upon Zion," is clearly asserted in the "sure word of prophecy." Can we contemplate the fact, that Syria should be now the theatre of operations, the issue of which is looked forward to with a vast variety of expectation, but with the most solemn and anxious forebodings by all the powers of Europe? That the present state of Jerusalem exercises an universality of attractive influence, drawing and fixing

the awakened and amazed attention of kings, statesmen, politicians, philosophers, and divines? That the interests of this sacred locality, small in geographical extent, but a *world* in the deep purposes of God and the moral history of man, should now throw into the shade the home concerns of the mightiest empires in the civilized world; and, as if by the power of moral gravitation, concentrate all of speculation, of national policy, of senatorial wisdom, of theological research—of rich hope, or painful dread towards itself? Now, after a lapse of centuries, do we find the Jews themselves distracted by an internal schism in Prussia and this country, the mighty result of which it is impossible to calculate; the determination of the one party, and that the most educated and influential, to discard the Talmudical and traditional comments of their Rabbinical writers, hitherto looked upon as inspired, and to receive “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms,” as the only divine and infallible standard of their faith, cannot fail to exert a wondrous change in the whole system of Judaism, and prepare the minds of “the remnant according to the election of grace,” to recognize “Him whom they have pierced,” and to know Him when “they look upon Him.” Now, for the first time for seventeen hundred years, may “Israel, according to the flesh,” hear from a

Christian Bishop of *converted* and of “*circumcised lips*” in “the holy city” itself; that “*that seed was Christ*, to whom the promise was made;” that the once “rejected,” but now to be revealed Messiah, is “the heir of all things,” “the King of the Jews,” to whom the crown and throne royal of David belong. Why is it that every eye is turned towards Judea, that even men of godless character resort, from motives of curiosity, to the inspired volume, for a clue to the mysterious turn of affairs as respects Israel?—that some (it is to be feared) are inquiring upon this point, with little better motive than that which actuated the mind of the wicked Herod when “he gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where Christ should be born.” Can this anxiety, this intense curiosity, this research, which in many cases arises from “troubled” apprehension, be accounted for from any other cause than the mysterious operation of God upon the human mind, preparing His own people for the full enjoyment of His mighty intentions towards His Church, and leaving His enemies “without excuse” for not securing the application of His mercy?

Another event, which stands in prophecy in intimate connexion with the second Advent of our Lord, is the “preaching of the Gospel as a *wit-*

ness unto all nations ;” and in this expression (as a witness) we discover the true intention of God in making known the name and work of Jesus unto man ; not as has been erroneously supposed, for the conversion of the whole mass of humanity, but, as the apostle Peter testifies, “ to take out of the Gentiles a people for his name. The Gospel, then, is to be preached as a witness *for* God *against* sin and *to* Christ, while “ the purpose of God, according to Election,” still stands, and none “ receive this witness” but “ the remnant” whom “ the Father hath given ” to the Son, to be saved. The Gospel, however, must be preached “ to every creature under heaven ;” not individually, but nationally, and “ then shall the end come.” And what is the fact as now concerns the nations of the earth upon this point ? The Bible has been, or is being, circulated in every part of the discovered world ; and when we say this, we may safely conclude that there is no part of the habitable earth which may not be found marked upon our charts, and (as has been well observed by a modern writer) that the surface of the globe has been ploughed up like a furrowed field, by men actuated by the spirit of commercial enterprise, missionary zeal, or philosophical discovery. We know of no country to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been offered, of no dialect into which that Gospel has not been translated ; and

with such facts before us, can we fail to discern the obvious signs of that consummation, when “the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled?”

Again, we find it attested, upon the authority of our blessed Lord himself, that an overflowing of wide-spread iniquity shall distinguish the days immediately preceding and terminating with “the coming of the Son of man.” This express assertion of our Lord precludes all scriptural expectation of the progressive moral and spiritual advancement of the *mass* of *mankind*, or the introduction of a state of millennial blessedness *antecedent* to His manifestation; and upon what ground can the enlightened student of prophecy indulge such a hope, if “in the latter days iniquity shall abound, the love of many wax cold, and the Lord when he cometh scarcely find faith on the earth?” How is it possible that a millennium of blessedness can co-exist with such an universality of ungodliness? If during “the thousand years” of the reign of Christ and his saints, “Satan shall be bound,” and his power over man be totally suspended,—if, during that period, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,” where is there room left or possibility admitted for the co-existence upon this earth of sin and sinners? How can the saints of Christ reign and triumph, and the church of

God "take and possess the kingdom," while "the man of sin," or the apocalyptic "beast" is suffered "to deceive them that dwell on the earth," to oppress the truth, and to "oppose himself against all that is called God or is worshipped?" How can *universal righteousness* and *abounding iniquity*, the unrestricted rule of Christ, and the matured and monstrous influence of Satan, signalize *the same period*? The obvious testimony of Scripture, then, is, and the equally obvious conclusion of the believer must be, that the millennium of purity and life, predicted in Scripture as the inheritance of those "whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life," cannot be introductory to, but must be introduced by, the second advent of the Lord Jesus; the spread of iniquity, then, up to that time when the filling up of its measure shall provoke the outpouring of the last judgments, must be considered as an event intimately connected with the Redeemer's appearance; and do we not now behold this dark but certain sign in our own times? What is the state of our own land, hitherto so highly blessed with pure christian privileges, and presenting to the other nations of the earth a bright model of national virtue and morality? Are not our periodicals black with the records of murder, robbery, and incendiarism? Is not the heart shocked by the frequent

reports of those acts of self-destruction which afford necessarily the evidence of Divine wrath either in the madness or infidelity of the suicide? Are not the most sacred and tender bonds of life violated and rent by the perpetration of acts immoral, sensual, devilish? Has not gross iniquity, founding its claim to popular acceptance upon the denial of the inspiration and authority of the word of God, cast itself into an organized form, in which, under the name of a society, it proposes to usher in a 'new moral world,' the statutes of which present a blasphemous and hellish repeal of the laws of God. Are not "the days of Noah and of Lot upon us?" Are not the majority of mankind, yea, even in Christendom, for the most part occupied, as the devoted people of those ages were, and as the members of the apostate Gentile churches shall be "when the Son of man cometh in his glory?"

Another and the last event to which we shall now allude, which in prophetic announcement stands in close connexion with the second coming of our Lord, is the *filling up of the body of antichrist*; this you will find clearly set forth in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Revelation of St. John. There we have the fearful but irrevocable announcement, that "all who are upon the face of the earth shall worship the beast, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life." This,

then, is the great confederated apostacy. Christ's mystical body is being filled up until each member "arrives in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," and until "all the members, being many, are manifested to be one body," in perfect maturity. This combination and growth of God's spiritual children had its pledge and commencement in the "mystery of godliness," God's incarnation in the flesh, and will continue until the last of God's hidden ones be "gathered in from the four winds of heaven." So it is with the body of "the beast," or antichrist; no sooner did the "mystery of godliness" put forth its power for the fulfilment of the gracious purposes of God in gathering in sinners within the brotherhood of his adopted family, than "the mystery of iniquity" began also to "work," to collect and array its agents and elements of rebellion against God. This fearful revolt has its pledge and commencement in the incarnation of "Satan," or "the dragon who gave to the beast his seat and his great authority." This "seat" is Rome, and this "authority" the papacy; and as "the revelation of Jesus Christ" and "the manifestation of the sons of God" synchronize together and form the crowning work of God's dispensations of grace, so the full "revelation of antichrist"

ples, in the secession of several ministers and members of the Establishment from its pale, and their adhesion to the ranks of Popery ; and have we not every reason to apprehend that the defection from Protestant truth will be much more extensive ? It is in vain for the abettors of Tractarianism to affirm that ‘no well-instructed Catholic of the Church of England has abandoned her communion for that of Rome.’ Is it not manifest that they who have left her pale are the most strenuous advocates for those principles which *they pronounce* to be *Catholic* ? And is not this an evidence of their *popish* rather than of their *catholic* character ? And what is the value of such an assertion but this, that one man conceives that he cannot conscientiously hold them without professing to be a Papist, and another imagines that it is legitimate for him to adopt them while he still continues within the communion of a church which *unequivocally condemns them*. It is true that some of the advocates of these principles *profess a strong opposition to Romanism*, and have written against some of the *minor details* and scholastic definitions of that system ; but the controversy has been more with its *name* than with its *nature*,—its main distinguishing principles are admitted. The high vantage-ground of scripture truth has been abandoned by these controversialists, and the

great charge levelled against Romanism is, not that it teaches doctrines *subversive* of the *truth* of *God*, but that it is an '*intruder* in these realms;' the objection, then, is one merely of *place*, and not of *principle*, and can never be sustained. If *Poper*y be *right*, then is it an '*intruder*' *no-where*—it is bound, upon the authority of God, to diffuse its principles to the utmost bounds of the earth. But if *Poper*y be *wrong*, it is *wrong everywhere*, and an *intruder everywhere*; TRUTH is ONE and the same in all climes and countries; and *error* can never be supported upon the ground of *prescription*. The doctrines propounded by the writers of the Oxford Tracts clearly show that the opposition between them and *Poper*y is not one of *contrariety* but *competition*—not of *repugnance* but of *rivalry*. Each party claims the dignity of *catholic*, and *precisely upon the same ground*. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bare rule through their means, and my people will have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

These are amongst some of the remarkable "signs of the times" we live in, and add force to our Lord's admonition in the text: "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*"

From these words we learn, 1st, The *twofold duty* enjoined upon us by the Lord : *watchfulness* and *prayer*. 2ndly, The *twofold end* contemplated by its performance : *escape* and *acceptance*. 1st. As to *watchfulness*. This duty is enforced in the following passages of scripture : Luke xii. 35, &c. " Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." Again, this duty is enjoined, 1 Peter v. 8 : " Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." And we thus read in Revelation xvi. 15 : " *Behold I come as a thief*, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." And is there not much cause for this repeated admonition ? Is not the Christian surrounded by many perils ? We are to watch against *Satan*, his various temptations and allurements to sin, his assaults upon us, not only through the medium of external objects, but his excitement of the remaining corruptions of our own hearts. We are to watch against his subtle disguises and imitations

of truth, his mimicry of humility and holiness, his substitution of "will worship for a spiritual and commanded service," his prompting to that "bodily exercise which profiteth little," to the prejudice of "that godliness which is profitable unto all things." We are to watch against his "transformation into an angel of light," and that of his agents into "ministers of righteousness." This subtle personation of both is thus described in 2 Cor. xi. 13—15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."

We are to watch against all religious errors; "*holding fast*," by *God's infallible word*, the *only unerring rule of faith and practice*. We are to watch the *ministers of Christ*, to "search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so." We are to obey our Lord's admonition, not only as to the *manner* of our hearing, but the *matter* which we hear: "*Take heed what ye hear*." We are ever to remember that our Lord declares it to be characteristic of his people that they hear *no voice but his*, that they can discern between the sound of that blessed voice and that of any

other : " My sheep hear *my voice*, and I know them, and they *follow me*, and a *stranger* will they *not follow*, but will *flee from him*, for they know not the *voice of strangers*." We are to watch against the *first symptoms* of *wandering* and *apostacy* in our *teachers* ; this is St. Paul's rule : " Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which *we* have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The doctrine of ' the insufficiency of Scripture as a rule of religious faith,' is the signal to God's people that the teacher who propounds it is about to desert the citadel of truth, and to travel on the broad and precipitous road to apostacy ; he is about to migrate *somewhere*, and to leave *that spot* which has ever been the *fortress* and *refuge* of " the saints and martyrs of Jesus." This is the *starting point*, and as the benighted traveller pursues his devious path, the *first stage* at which he stops in quest of his desired object is *human tradition* : having lighted upon this spot and rested awhile, the next stage in his progress is fixed upon with reference to the discovery of the *favoured channel through which the stream of this tradition runs*. This object of pursuit is arrived at in a *false view of apostolic succession*, which is made to consist in the mere *designation to office by episcopal authority, sup-*

posed to be derived in a direct and unbroken line from the twelve apostles. From this imaginary seat of truth, the way becomes broader and more distinct; the security against error is supposed to be complete; the traveller is at liberty to select for himself the next stage in his progress. He proceeds onward to the merit of works, sacramental justification, the literal but undefined presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, sole catholicity, exclusive salvation, papal supremacy, regal and ecclesiastical, the brand of the beast, and the denounced malediction of God. So far we have traced the route of the deserter from the camp of Christ to Rome, and we have now only to consider his equipment. Indeed, we may form some conclusion as to the point for which he has set out, from the nature of the accommodation he requires. We have, then, in his outfit, first of all, a large stone altar, on which a substitute for Christ is to be offered as a sacrifice, or what is still more blasphemous, the identical offering of Christ "made once for all" is to be repeated; next we have a supply of candles intended as an emblem of the light of God's truth, but too fearful an indication that the "true candlestick has been removed," and that "the light that is here is darkness." Next we have a large roll of "traditions" instead of, or of co-ordinate authority with, Revelation,

bound round with 'a chain of the Fathers' CATENA PATRUM.' Next we have an assortment of *pictures* and *crucifixes* as '*helps to devotion,*' and as supplying more effective aid in prayer than "the Spirit of God, which helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Next, we have a code of 'canons and rules ecclesiastical,' prescribing the *best days* for *travelling*, and the *best mode* of *self-treatment*, *rules for fasting* and *mortification*—the observance of "*days, months, and times, and years,*" which the apostle Paul apprehended to be tokens, that his apostolic labours amongst the Galatians "had been in vain." Again, we have a *torn and mutilated Bible* thrown loosely into the waggon, either to be taken or not, as most convenient, while the individual who heads the procession, is distinguished by a *peculiar attitude*, having his *back turned* to his *fellow-travellers*, whom he is leading to the "mystical Babylon, which is *spiritually* called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Watch against *this*, watch *passing events*. Watch for the Lord Jesus, look for, wait for his coming.

But, secondly, we are here commanded to "*pray always.*" We are to pray for *spiritual light*, that God may "enlighten our understandings, that we may know the hope of our calling;"

that we may be enabled to take a true view of the character and will of God, of our own wretched and lost condition as sinners, of the duty that devolves upon us as responsible creatures, and especially of the infinite love of God as displayed in the "gift of his dear Son." We are to pray for an *increase* of *faith*, that it may be every day stronger as to the object upon which it is fixed, and as to the effect which it produces on ourselves. We are to pray for that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"—for the *indwelling* of Christ in our souls—for a more perfect *conformity* to his image, and for the possession and progress of every spiritual feature which can assimilate us to Him. We are to pray for *patience*, that we may "possess our souls" in blessed and hopeful expectation of *His* coming, that we may be able to "endure unto the end;" that when he appeareth, we may possess those blessings which are the inheritance of the persevering and victorious believer. We are to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," that God would "pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication" upon his ancient people; that he would influence the minds more and more of the kings and princes of the earth to facilitate their return to their covenanted inheritance; and especially that he would spiritualize their hearts and remove the veil that now covers them,

and turn them to him who is their true Lord and King, that they may “fear him in the latter days.” This is the twofold duty enjoined upon us by our blessed Lord, while the Scripture presents us with the *threefold source* of our *security* against sin and apostacy. Our *election*, on having our “*names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life* ; our adherence to the *Bible*, or “*keeping the word of his patience* ;” and our *conversion*, or “*having an unction from the Holy One*, that we may *know all things*, and *abide in Jesus*.”

Lastly, we propose to consider the *twofold end* of watchfulness and prayer ; “*that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man*.” *Escape* and *acceptance*, then, are the two great ends contemplated in the performance of this twofold duty : the expression “*Escape*” intimates the most imminent peril, and this intimation is confirmed by the testimony of the apostle Paul, (1 Thess. v. 2, 3,) “*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ; for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape*.” Believers, then, are here warned to expect “*great tribulation*,” trial, and difficulty ; “*many shall be purified and made white* ;” “*the righteous shall*

scarcely be saved ;” and though the Christian’s hope is founded upon “ the Rock of ages,” the faithful promise and the immutable covenant of God ; yet such will be the trials of *that day*, that *salvation* will be *only* “ *escape*.” But there is a “ *worthiness*” here spoken of to qualify for “ standing before the Son of man ;” and what is this worthiness ? Are we to consider it personal or inherent ? anything that belongs to ourselves by nature, or which even grace has *implanted* ? No ; it consists in our *identification with Christ*, our “ justification by his blood ;” for he that is *righteous* shall be *righteous still* ;”—in possessing an unction from Him ; for “ he that is *holy* shall be *holy still* :” it consists in our “ love of his appearing,” and our “ looking for and hastening to the coming of his day.” In this comprehensive worthiness we shall be “ able to stand before the Son of man,” not *afraid*, not *ashamed*, not *destroyed*,—“ to stand,” *pardoned*, *acknowledged*, as his *redeemed* ; “ to stand” “ on the sea of glass, having the harps of God ; to sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb ;” to raise our anthem, and to cry, “ Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints ;” “ to stand”—unscathed amidst the wreck of worlds, and wearing our beautified and

glorified bodies, “to *stand for ever*” in the presence of “Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.”

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